



BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS -MARKKINOINTISTRATEGIA SOSIAALISESSA MEDIASSA

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KÄHÄRÄ, KARRI:

Business-to-Business -markkinointistrategia sosiaalisessa mediassa

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Tämä opinnäytetyö keskittyy markkinointistrategian kehittämiseen business-to-business -yritykselle sosiaalisissa medioissa tapahtuvaa markkinointia varten. Opinnäytetyössä tarkastellaan sosiaalisia medioita ja markkinointistrategian luomista eri kirjallisuus- ja verkkolähteiden avulla. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on selvittää sosiaalisten medioiden mahdollisuuksia business-to-business -markkinointia harjoittavalle yritykselle ja kehittää konkreettinen markkinointisuunnitelma sosiaalisissa medioissa harjoitettavaa markkinointia varten. Opinnäytetyö on tehty Glass Performance Days -organisaatiolle. Glass Performance Days keskittyy kansainvälisen lasiteollisuuden kehittämiseen.

Opinnäytetyössä todetaan, että business-to-business -markkinointia voidaan soveltaa sosiaalisissa medioissa haasteista huolimatta. Haasteena todetaan sosiaalisten medioiden suuntautuneisuus business-to-consumer -markkinoille. Haasteena voidaan todeta myös, ettei business-to-business -markkinoinnissa olla riittävästi tietoisia sosiaalisista medioista ja lisäksi haasteena on teknologinen osaaminen sosiaalisissa medioissa.

Opinnäytetyön keskeisenä osana on markkinointistrategian luominen, mikä on edellytys sosiaalisissa medioissa onnistumiselle. Business-to-Business -markkinoinnin keskeinen osa on asiakassuhteiden kehittäminen ja bränditietoisuuden luominen sosiaalisissa medioissa.

Opinnäytetyön perusteella voidaan todeta, että business-to-business -markkinoinnissa suuntaudutaan sosiaalisten medioiden käyttämiseen yhä enemmän, ja markkinointi sosiaalisissa medioissa on välttämätöntä ja hyödyllistä.

Asiasanat: Business-to-Business -markkinointi, sosiaalinen media, markkinointistrategia

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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KÄHÄRÄ, KARRI:
Business-to-Business Marketing Strategy in Social Media

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This bachelor's thesis focuses on creating a marketing strategy in social media for a business-to-business company. In this thesis social media and marketing strategies are discussed through several sources of information, both literature and web materials. The objective of this bachelor's thesis is to define the opportunities in social media for a business-to-business company and to create an actual marketing plan for marketing in social media. This Bachelor's thesis was commissioned by Glass Performance Days (GPD), a company that focuses on developing international glass industry.

The bachelor's thesis states that business-to-business marketing can be applicable in social media, despite the challenges. One challenge seems to be that social media targets at the business-to-consumer markets. Others to consider are the inadequate awareness of social media among business-to-business marketers and the technological capability of the social platforms.

Part of this bachelor's thesis is to create a marketing strategy that is a key element for success in social media. Marketing strategy in business-to-business marketing focuses on developing customer relationships and creating brand awareness in social media.

On the basis of this bachelor's thesis it is possible to state that business-to-business companies are moving towards social media and marketing in social media can be regarded as necessary and useful in the future.

Key words: Business-to-Business marketing, social media, marketing strategy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
2 SOCIAL MEDIA.....	7
2.1 History of social media.....	8
2.2 Future of social media.....	9
3 BEFORE ENTERING TO SOCIAL MEDIA.....	10
3.1 Social media statistics.....	10
3.2 Social media research.....	13
3.3 Competitor analysis.....	15
4 DEFINITION OF MARKETING STRATEGY.....	17
4.1 Building the social media strategy.....	18
4.2 SWOT-analysis of Glass Performance Days.....	20
4.3 Perceptual map.....	24
5 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING.....	27
6 GETTING READY INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY.....	30
6.1 Social media engagement for GPD.....	31
6.2 Measuring social media results.....	37
7 CONCLUSIONS.....	40
REFERENCES.....	43

1 INTRODUCTION

The writer of this bachelor's thesis did his four months internship in Glass Performance Days. The internship was a part of the studies in Tampere University of Applied Sciences. The Glass Performance Days (GPD) is an independent forum dedicated to the development of the global glass industry. GPD is organized biennially, consisting of the largest and leading international glass conference, several workshops, glass product exhibition and versatile social activities. GPD conference is held every year in China and every second year in Finland. GPD conference is also held in various locations such as Brazil 2010 and India in January 2011. Glass Performance Days conferences concentrate directly in business-to-business and they are targeted at glass industry professionals. Participants and speakers of GPD conferences are in the top management (39 %) or in the manager positions in various areas of the industry.

While doing the internship the writer of this thesis had a discussion about his opportunity to write his bachelor's thesis for GPD. He was personally interested about the business-to-business marketing opportunities in World Wide Web, especially about the marketing opportunities in social media. GPD was interested about this idea because in GPD they already had thought about the opportunities and growth that can be achieved through social media.

In this bachelor's thesis the writer focuses on business-to-business marketing and on developing a marketing strategy for social media. Main question the writer answers in his thesis is the following; what opportunities and threats social media brings to companies. As part of the bachelor's thesis the writer implements marketing and creates a marketing strategy plan for Glass Performance Days. This includes the competitor analysis, an engagement strategy and SWOT-analysis. A research was conducted in social media sites that would be suitable for Glass Performance Days to start social media engagement. The writer has chosen four social media sites for GPD because they are considered to be important marketing hubs. They offer steady traffic everyday and research proves that the demographics of these sites are ideal for Glass Performance Days' purposes.

As a topic social media is very wide so the writer focuses on building a social media strategy for the business-to-business purposes. The writer applied in the bachelor's thesis some general issues most known about social media. As a theory in this thesis the writer has used social media, marketing and business-to-business marketing literature and web materials about social media. As one part of the thesis the writer brings in his own visions about social media through his own experiences. He has used social media for the past five years actively (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) for his own personal use. He has got in touch with the social media also through various school assignments and work related projects.

2 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has created a new level of influencers. It understands the role people have in the social process, that is not only reading and disseminating information. Social media as a term is not explicit and it has various interpretations.

Social media is called a post-industrial phenomenon. The popularity and the awareness of how to use technology in social media have come to people's knowledge recently. Most of the social media contents are generated by its users and the size of the communities, and how active they are in these platforms changes a lot. It depends of the subject of the community, trends, images and brands. The Internet Wikipedia 2010, that is one of the social media platforms, defines the interpretation of social media like this:

“Social media are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses web-based technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogues” (Wikipedia encyclopedia, 2010).

Most popular examples of communities and applications in social media are Wikipedia, Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. Also when talking about social media you have to mention blogs, podcasts, RSS, and instant messaging. These are often associated with Web 2.0. “Term Web 2.0 is commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive systemic biases, interoperability, user-centered design, and developing the World Wide Web.” Web 2.0 has taken the use of internet more towards social behaviour and interaction. (O'Reilly 2005.)

Another definition of the social media is according to Professor Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010) “A group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

There is not one specific term for social media but social media can be defined as a combination of forums and communities, blogs, social networks (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn), multimedia sharing (e.g. YouTube), micro blogging (e.g. Twitter) and participating through various applications and services.

Social Media Landscape



FIGURE 1. Social Media Landscape (Cavazza 2008).

2.1 History of social media

Social media has been established long time ago and it is not a new phenomenon. Today social media marketing has become to be a new addition to organizations' integrated marketing communications plan. This integrated marketing communications brings together the elements of the promotional mix; advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing, and sales promotion.

Social behaviour online has been existing long before the hype of Facebook and Twitter. It has started in 1980s when the first sites were established online such as Bulletin Board System the popularity of which lasted till the end of '90s. Coming to the twentieth century internet technology made possible the social network boom. In 2002 social networking really started to spread in World Wide Web. Many social media sites launched in early year 2000 are still present and growing such as LinkedIn and MySpace. After 2006 when Facebook became public and microblog site Twitter was established the use of social media exploded globally. Social media platforms are growing every year by attracting millions of new members. Growth of social media has forced business-to-business and business-to-consumer companies to online. Today companies do not ask should we engage in social media, the question is where in social media we engage. (O'Dell 2011.)

2.2 Future of social media

Social media networks are here to stay. Sustainable development of the technology will make sure of that. The main question is where social media is going in the future. It is thought engagement with consumers will stay as solid but mobile and video usage will be growing in the future. Mobile phone companies provide technology in smart phones that gives the possibility for easy access to social networks wherever you are.

Brian Solis in his e-book *The Future of communication – A manifesto for integrating social media into marketing* defines how the communication and integrated marketing will be in the future of social media. Solis defines it as a mix of traditional media and new media. More businesses will be engaged in social media that turns the shape of communication to more social. Communication is changing more to listening, sharing and participating. According to Solis this will “humanize brands and create loyalty”. He points out that in the future more business is done in virtual worlds and the future of communication brings sociology into marketing. (Solis 2010.)

3 BEFORE ENTERING TO SOCIAL MEDIA

The common mistake companies make before entering to social media is their approach to it. Social media is not only about the technological knowledge and applications. It is about the people inside the communities and users of these platforms. The main idea of social media is to share, communicate and build customer relationships that are the key elements in business-to-business transactions. Before implementing any kind of strategies it is vital to do research of social media statistics. (Mayfield 2007.)

The writer of this bachelor's thesis has chosen four social media sites Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter for this thesis. These social media sites have more than five million visitors every day. These sites are considered to be an important hub for marketing and they offer a huge amount of steady traffic every day. The main reason for choosing these mentioned sites in this bachelor's thesis is that the writer specifically considers what kind of marketing strategy Glass Performance Days should create for these social media sites. The second reason is; demographics of the users and social media applications in these sites are useful for GPD's business-to-business marketing purposes.

3.1 Social media statistics

Usually it is thought that social media is only for younger generation and it has nothing to do with older people or not even with business-to-business operations. 67% of all internet users engage in social media. Latest general statistics is taken from the research made by Brian Solis; how age and users are divided globally in social media. Brian Solis has included in his social media research 19 social media sites. The age demographics (figure 2) demonstrates well that social media in present day is much more used by age range of from 35 – 44 (57% of users) to 45 – 54 years old (15% of users). (Solis 2010.)

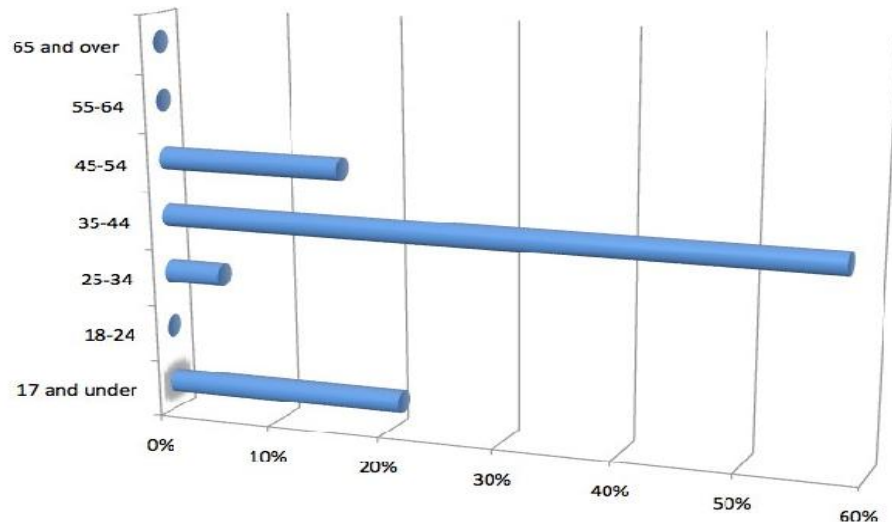


FIGURE 2. Social Media Landscape (Cavazza 2008.)

Social Media Statistics



People on Facebook:

More than 500 million active users.
50% of active users log-in everyday.
Average users have 130 friends.

Activity on Facebook:

There are over 900 million objects that people interact with (pages, groups, events and community pages).

Global Research:

More than 70 translations available on the site.
About 70% of Facebook users are outside the United States.

Platform:

Every month, more than 250 million people engage with Facebook on external websites.

(Source:<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>)



People on LinkedIn:	More than 90 million members in over 200 countries.
People on LinkedIn:	A new member joins to LinkedIn approximately every second. . Median Age: 41.
Activity on LinkedIn:	Executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members.
Global research:	Half of LinkedIn members are outside the U.S.

(Source:<http://www.booleanblackbelt.com/2010/09/linkedin-demographics-and-visitor-statistics>)



People on Twitter:	Currently more than 100 million users worldwide. Per month 190 million visitors.
Global research:	Twitter is the 20th most popular web page. 3rd popular in a way of sharing links after Facebook and email.
Activity on Twitter:	66 % of companies in social media are involved in Twitter.

(Source:<http://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/infographic-facebook-vs-twitter-2010-user-stats>)



People on YouTube:

Majority of the users are from 18 to 55.

51% of the members use YouTube at least once a week or more often.

Global research:

2nd used search engine after Google.
70% of the traffic comes outside the U.S.

Activity on YouTube:

Every minute a new video is downloaded to YouTube.
Over two billion videos watched daily.
Average person watches 15 minutes per day YouTube.

(Source: http://www.youtube.com/t/fact_sheet,
<http://www.viralblog.com/research/youtube-statistics>)

3.2 Social media research

Based on the statistics and general research it is vital to do more concrete research. Where is the communication going in Internet? How are we already presence in World Wide Web? What our consumer is talking about us? (Li & Bernoff 2008.) To answer these question companies must create a customer profile e.g. using a demographic and psychographic approach. This helps the company to save time and not to loose valuable resources when entering to social media. Customer profile will assist the companies to target their social media plan right from the beginning. (Ahola, Kukkonen & Koivumäki 2002, 56-57.)

In a demographic analysis companies seek to find the target consumers in social media. Demographic research provides important information especially for business-to-business companies whose purpose is to increase sales or brand awareness. The demographic analysis defines the characteristics age, income, education, status. (Ahola, Kukkonen & Koivumäki 2002, 57.)

E.g. demographics of LinkedIn (social network) shows that; there are more than 90 million members in over 200 countries, the median age is 41 and users of LinkedIn tend to be more senior, 56 % are “individual contributors”, 16 % are at management level, and 28 % are at director/VP level or above. Majority of the LinkedIn members (66 %) are decision makers or they have influence in the purchase decisions at their companies. (Anderson 2008.) Another e.g. Twitter (Microblog) has currently over 100 million users world wide, 30 % of the users are aged from 26 to 34. In the United States the household income of 33 % of the users is 26 thousand U.S. dollars – 50 thousand U.S. dollars, and the household income of 49 % of the users in the United States is 51 thousand U.S. dollars or more. 25 % of all users follow brands in Twitter. 48 % of the users are male and 52 % are female. (www.twitter.com; Hepburn 2010.)

The psychographic analysis takes the research further than the demographic approach. It is used to analyse lifestyles, social class, behaviors and attitudes of consumers. People in the same demographic group can vary a lot from each other. Commonly marketers only rely on the demographic data but the psychographic analysis can effectively work together with the demographic analysis. To implement a complete customer analysis marketers and companies need to be aware of both demographics and psychographics in order to build their market segments successfully.

Commonly marketers start from segmenting markets by lifestyle and behavior variables. It is considered to be the most efficient way to start building the market segments. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 169-170;
<http://www.allbusiness.com/marketing/market-research/426-1.html>.)

3.3 Competitor analysis

Companies should constantly follow up what competitors are doing in the markets and media. How competitors are implementing their marketing strategy and is there a company who is the “entrepreneur”, which company’s activities everyone is talking about. (Hedman & Pappinen 1999, 174.) Competitor analysis is considered to be a necessary element of the strategic planning.

Competitor analysis provides information that creates an advantage to the strategic planning for the future. This reflects directly to the forecast for returns in the future investments. Analyzing markets and competitor’s corporations needs to be proceeded systematically by using various tools of competitor analyses instead of operating on the basis of “informal” information. (Tikkanen & Vassinen 2010, 113; Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 324-325.)

Davidson (1997) in his book of Even More Offensive Marketing describes how competitor information and data can be divided into three categories (Davidson 1997, 204–205):

- Recorded data: information is available internally or externally. Good examples include competitors’ annual reports, analysts’ reports and product brochures.
- Observable data: this information has to be actively searched and clarified through several sources. Good examples are competitors’ pricing, marketing campaigns and promotions.
- Opportunistic data: to get this data, planning and organisation data are referred to as empiric data. Information comes from suppliers, customers, trade fairs etc.

After analysing competitor data it is important to define the scope and nature of the industry. Competitor array tool defines the objectives of the competitors and what they are seeking from the market place. This leads to deeper

understanding of customer behaviour and what customers expect to benefit from the products or services.

To do marketing in social media it is important to know how competitors are implementing their marketing activities in all media. This can be researched with the use of a media scanning tool. Media scanning is a much used technique to seek relevant information about competitors' media strategy and it gives information on their budget allocation. It reveals information about segmentation of the competitors and their targeting strategy. This helps to define own media strategy plan.

On the other hand it has to be remembered when using media scanning for marketing planning that companies should not fall into copying. Companies need to create a strategic advantage to their competitors by creating a new more innovative communication plan. (Rope 2000, 28-31.)

4 DEFINITION OF MARKETING STRATEGY

The strategy is the most commonly used word in the business world, but it is not easily to be defined or implemented to real life cases. There is no point in setting objectives and planning strategies that are not in the context of the business portfolio; nor developing strategies that are impossible to be implemented with resources available. (Baker & Hart 2008, 105; Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 88.)

Brennan, Canning and McDowell in their book *Business-to-Business Marketing*, break and indentify strategic marketing in the following way:

- Emphasis on long-term implications. Here strategic marketing takes long-term perspective that makes changes in the external business environment. Business environment objectives are set for long-term and the monitoring of the business environment and the industry development is seen as the central element of strategic marketing planning.
- Corporate inputs. Day-to-day tactical marketing can often be made without reference to the wider activities of the companies' strategic marketing. However in making strategic marketing decisions, managers need to consider the corporate culture, stakeholders and resources.
- Varying roles for different products/markets. Analyzing the whole company's portfolio of products and markets to achieve the overall goals in different segments.

Recourses are released to areas where the growth and opportunities are seen to be greater. (Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 90-91.)

Another definition for marketing strategy is from Henry Mintzberg in the book of "Five Ps for Strategy". Mintzberg defines strategy with five segments; Plan, Ploy, Pattern, Position, and Perspective. A strategy is a plan that is a course of

action and a set of guidelines. The purpose is to get the company from where it is now to where it wants to be in the future. Ploy is a specific plan intended to outwit an opponent or a competitor. E.g. Company might be investing in product development or new technology in order to try to limit the competition.

A pattern strategy is seen as a consistency in behaviour over time. Compared to a plan strategy Mintzberg defines it as a stream of action. A pattern also may appear without preconception while plans may go unrealized. A position strategy is locating the company in an environment that becomes a united force, between the internal and the external context. Companies' goals are to establish a unique and customer valued position in the market.

A perspective strategy is a company's fundamental way of doing business. Market positions must follow the fundamental purpose and company values. A perspective strategy follows the company goals while taking into account its social responsibilities. It brings out the organization members' innovation and actions and it highlights the individual participations to the strategy. (Mintzberg 1992, 12-17.)

4.1 Building the social media strategy

Building up the marketing strategy in social media follows the same steps that building up a marketing strategy for products or services. Strategic planning is developing and maintaining a strategic capability of organizations' goals in the changing markets.

Before implementing any kind of a marketing strategy; at first the mission has to be defined and questions have to be raised; Why are we going to social media? Where are we going there? What our approach should be? Social media trends change rapidly and this requires immediate actions from the companies. This requires that the mission is especially easy to be renewed. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 37-39; Tikkanen & Vassinen 2010, 23.) Many organizations develop a mission statement to answer these questions. A mission statement defines in a larger scale what organizations want to accomplish. What are the objectives

and goals? Can the objectives and goals be measured? (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 38.)

A deep understanding of the customer behaviour is also essential in social media marketing process. This helps companies to establish and bring out the extra value provided for customer segments. (Ahola, Kukkonen & Koivumäki 2002, 55.)

Kotler & Armstrong (2006, 37) define how at the corporate level companies start defining their overall purpose and mission (figure 3).

Steps in Strategic Planning

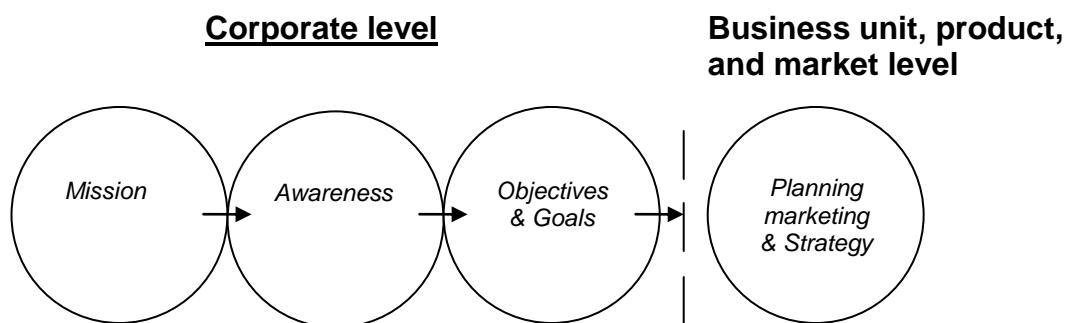


FIGURE 3: Steps in strategic planning (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 37.)

Globally companies are attracted about social media and it has become to be one of the key areas in a marketing communications plan. The first step before entering to social media is the planning process. Companies need to leave the social media tools to be used as the last thing. (Griner, 2009.)

This requires analyzing social media with various aspects by using marketing strategy tools e.g. a SWOT-analysis and a perspective map. This way companies can evaluate their possibilities in social media and what might be the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

SWOT-analysis is used for strategic planning and for evaluating the company's environment. The main purpose is to specify the objectives of the business or

the project. SWOT-analysis is commonly used for marketing purposes and it can be divided into two categories; internal analysis and external analysis.

The internal analysis defines the strengths and the weaknesses of the company. Strengths are the resources and the special advantages (technology, product, services) that the company has compared to the competitors. Weaknesses are the elements that are seen unfavourable to the company.

The external analysis defines the opportunities and threats of the markets. Opportunities are about what engaging to new markets would bring. As opportunities can be seen the increase of sales volume and the growth of brand awareness or developing a new business. Threats are the elements that put the organization in danger e.g. a new competitor in markets or a technological change that might take the services and products out of the markets. After the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been identified the company can implement the results in a SWOT-matrix. (Kotler & Armstrong 2009, 78-80; Foong 2007.)

4.2 SWOT-analysis of Glass Performance Days:

STRENGTHS

Internationally Recognized Event
Experienced and Professional Staff
Wide Contact Network
New Homepages
Respect of Glass Industry

WEAKNESSES

Lack of Resources
Knowledge of Technology
B2B event
Support
Readiness

OPPORTUNITIES

Cost Effectiveness
Building Customer Relationships
Reach out (in theory) Millions of People
Raise GPD Brand Awareness
Marketing Advantage

THREATS

Resources/Timing
Lack of Followers
Awareness of Technology
Communication
Stock Rules

FIGURE 4. SWOT-analysis

Strengths:

Glass Performance Days is an internationally recognized event that has managed to establish its presence as a leading glass conference for industrial professionals. From 1992 when the first conference was held GPD has grown every year and spread internationally to China, India and Brazil. GPD conference attracts multinational companies to join the conference and also to sponsor the event. The success and acknowledgement GPD has got internationally attracts top professionals of the glass industry and general managers to participate as speakers and attend to workshops. Participants come from various industrial economic areas e.g. automotive, solar, energy, glass and architectural fields.

GPD team's personal contacts and GPD database include thousands of contacts. This is a clear strength when GPD is launching its social media activity and in gaining followers. Besides the GPD team there is a wide range of committees whose members come from multinational companies globally. Commonly they are at the top of the company's hierarchy and asking them to join GPD in social media would create from the start a professional approach and communication.

New homepages, recently made for GPD, allow the effective use of web 2.0 by creating direct links from the homepage to GPD social media sites and sharing of videos.

Opportunities:

Previously in this thesis the writer referred to the fact that social media is here to stay. Businesses are moving fast to social networks and platforms.

Opportunities in social media are various; it depends on the marketing strategy and company objectives in social media. Opportunities for GPD can be seen in creating sales, building the brand image, awareness and customer relationships.

Even though GPD conference is fully focused to business-to-business segment and it is considered that social media suits better for business-to-consumer side, it is vital to remember that marketing in all industries is going for social media in the future. Josh Bernoff, the senior vice president of Forrester Research, quotes: "B2B marketer who is not already participating in social media is already late". (Li & Bernoff 2008.)

Participating in social media would raise the GPD brand awareness and raise the marketing of GPD conference into a new level. In the perceptual map chapter the writer of the thesis demonstrates that only a few glass conferences are active in social media. Engaging now in social media would create a marketing advantage to Glass Performance Days. This gives a better chance to build networks and share information than what the GPD competitors do. The main idea in sharing information and communication in social media reflects directly to GPD conference agenda. One aspect of the GPD agenda is the networking and the educational role (sharing).

Through social media GPD could strengthen customer relationships, bring the communication to a new level with current customers and co-operation partners. Social media are used today by hundreds of million people (*professional/individual*) world wide. This creates effective opportunities for GPD to reach also new customers.

Financial aspects must also be considered as an opportunity. In GPD there is a limited marketing budget to be implemented every year. To start social media activities does not require any or does require very low financial investments. To set up a fan page for e.g. in Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn is free. This is a considerable marketing advantage for Glass Performance Days.

Threats:

Though it is considered that social media marketing is low cost marketing it is highly time consuming. Timing causes the biggest threat for GPD. GPD organization is small and the staff is travelling constantly promoting the Glass Performance Days conference. Is there enough time for the engagement in

social media? This requires clear internal roles and who is in charge of social media activities.

As a threat it can be considered to be the awareness of the technology. To implement high performance and successful social media activities there has to be a basic knowledge of the applications. Without technological knowledge communication is not ongoing and transparent in social media. Responses to the questions/inquiries should be done under 24 hours and updates to the social media need to be done often enough. This raises again the topic of the timing issues and the importance of the internal roles.

Currently GPD has the possibility to create a marketing advantage to its competitors. We definitely can make assumption that glass conferences that are not engaging in social media will not be there in the near future. Social media trends change ongoing and this can be seen as a threat, if GPD cannot actively develop its social media performance compared to the competitors.

GPD is also working very closely with Glaston Public Listed Company. ("Glaston head office is located in Tampere, Finland. Glaston's share (GLA1V) is listed on the NASDAQ OMX Helsinki Small Cap List" (<http://www.glaston.net/en/About-Glaston/>).

Glaston's own rules regarding to communications need to be taken into consideration in social media. This will include certain rules set by NASDAQ OMX Helsinki. Stock rules are not directly related to GPD department but before starting up communication in social media with customers it is important to know that any information that might have influence on Glaston stock rate is forbidden to be shared.

Weaknesses:

The main threat is also the Glass Performance Day's main weakness, that is its lack of resources. Engaging in social media requires time and for a small unit like GPD this is a challenge. Social media requires constant surveillance of the communication. Impertinent comments must be edited and possible feedback

must be given fast. One solution for the resource issue would be to create a new trainee position with one focus on social media interaction. This position would be targeted especially for media communication students.

The technological knowledge of social media can be seen as a weakness for GPD in the same way as it can be seen as a threat. To be able to implement the strategy plan in social media technological knowledge has to be there. This would be also solved by hiring a trainee with previous user knowledge of social media platforms. Executives would be supervising the social media process. For further consideration this trainee could educate the executives in using social media and tools. To understand the basics of social media platforms does not require too much time.

Currently Glass Performance Days conference committees are not supporting the engagement in social media. This might be caused by the lack of knowledge in social media and the opportunities that social media have. Engagement in social media requires support from all the stakeholders. Committee members are top professionals of the glass industry and they have valuable information that could be shared through GPD social media sites. Their support would raise the business-to-business and professional aspect of GPD social media.

4.3 Perceptual map

After the SWOT-analysis it is good to take a closer look on how glass industry is present in social media. A perceptual map produces a competitive landscape that gives the guidelines for researchers. How company is related to its competitors and co-operation partners of the industrial markets. This helps the company to define the strengths and weaknesses related to competition. Idea of a perceptual map is the multidimensional or two dimensional scaling. A perceptual map can have several dimensions or it can be used in two dimensions. The multidimensional scaling uses set of proximities to map out the relationship between a set of objects. The relationship of organization to its competitors; similar companies or organizations are mapped close together and different ones are mapped apart. A disadvantage of the multi-dimensional scaling is that it is very challenging to implement it in a map and it is confusing

to be interpreted. Also a disadvantage is that the data collected from the multidimensional scaling is not always accurate.

Two-dimensional scaling is most commonly used. Its purpose is to evaluate what specific similarities and differences companies or organizations have in their pricing, products or marketing. (Jayalath, 2009.)

In evaluating Glass Performance Days and the glass industry conferences in social media the writer has used two-dimensional scaling. In the research the writer of this thesis has included glass conferences that are held annually and how these conferences are involved in social media (figure 5). Mainly North-American and UK companies are using social media as a part of their marketing plan.

ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA

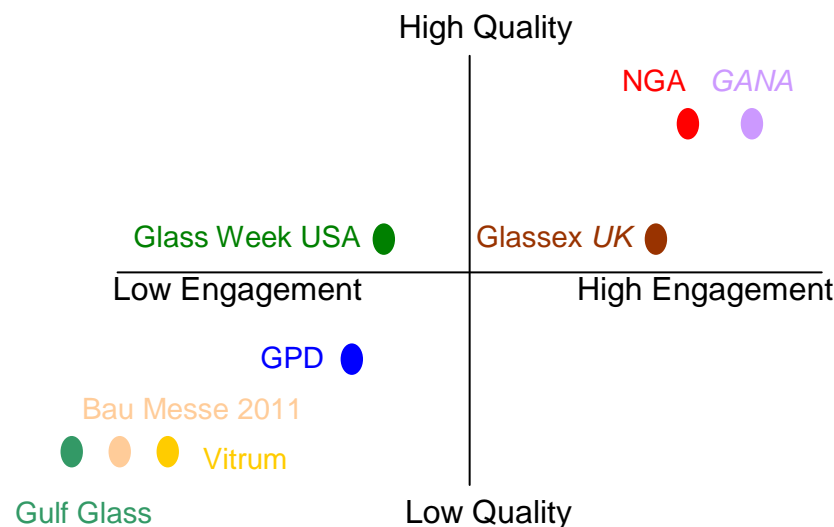


FIGURE 5. A perceptual map (<http://www.google.fi/perceptual-mapping>)

For the perceptual map the writer of this thesis did individual research in World Wide Web. Previous years in the USA and the UK the use of social media has been increasing rapidly in the business environment. This explains why their engagement in social media is high. In Europe the potential of social media has not been understood completely yet. This can be seen as a low engagement in social environment.

Based on the examination of the writer of this thesis on the glass conferences globally, NGA and GANA are taking the full advantage of social media in their marketing plan. They are engaged in Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and also they provide blogs. This can be considered as a high engagement in social environment. Glassex UK is using social media in Twitter and YouTube. They share links through Twitter and provide videos of the conference in YouTube. When comparing glass conferences in social media Glassex UK activities can be put on the high engagement category. Glass Week USA is sharing tweets and links in Twitter. They do involve in social media but only in one social platform. This can not be considered high engaging even though they are updating twitter account often.

Glass Performance Days has a low engagement in social media. Currently they are present in YouTube where only an introduction video is available. GPD has not included social media in its marketing plan, this is the factor why engagement is considered to be low. BAU MESSE 2011, Gulf Glass and Vitrum Glass conferences are not engaged anywhere in social media.

By analysing the perceptual map the GPD would now have a change to take a marketing advantage to competitors by implementing social media as a part of its marketing. Only a few glass conferences are engaging in social media even though social media is considered to be an important marketing hub for the future and low cost marketing. (Sources: www.glass.org, www.glasswebsite.com, www.gexhibition.com, www.glassweek.com, www.gpd.fi, www.bau-muenchen.com, www.vitrum-milano.it, www.glassinthegulf.com)

5 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

The communications strategy involves planning, implementing and controlling company's communication with the target audience to achieve objectives with the market segment. (Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 171-172.)

In building communications strategy companies use a variety of tools that is called a marketing communications mix; advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing tools. These are combined to communication scope that helps the companies to engage with customers and stakeholders. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 363.) It is necessary to define communication objectives first so the companies can actually implement the tools to actual marketing scope. (Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 172-173; Tikkanen & Vassinen 2010, 27.)

Objectives of communication can be monitored with several models. The most well known models are AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and DAGMAR (Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results). (Rope 2000, 279.)

The first stage of these models starts in building **awareness** where the potential customer becomes familiar with the product or brand. In this stage companies are aiming to generate leads by using the mass media tools such as advertising and public relations. This will reflect directly to the next stage that is the **interest** stage. In this stage customers are seeking to find more information about the product, brand or company. In the segments where interest is developed companies will use communication tools to handle customer enquiries. Next step is the **desire** stage where customer is evaluating and comparing the products, brands and companies information. This is the step in which customers start to eliminate companies. To keep the interest of the customers high companies must provide enough information by using their communication plan. Websites, trade fairs and social media are considered to be useful methods to share information. Communication objectives are now progressed to the **action** stage. Customer makes the purchasing decision and becomes a

new customer. This requires constant information sharing by the company. Here all the parts of the communications mix tools come together; advertising, social media, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. By combining the communications mix the companies try to achieve a **re-purchase** from the customer. This will ultimately lead to customer **loyalty**. (Rope 2000, 280-281; Brennan, Canning & McDowell 2008, 174 – 176.) Figure 6 defines the marketing communications process stages. (Rope 2000, 280.)

Marketing Communications Process:

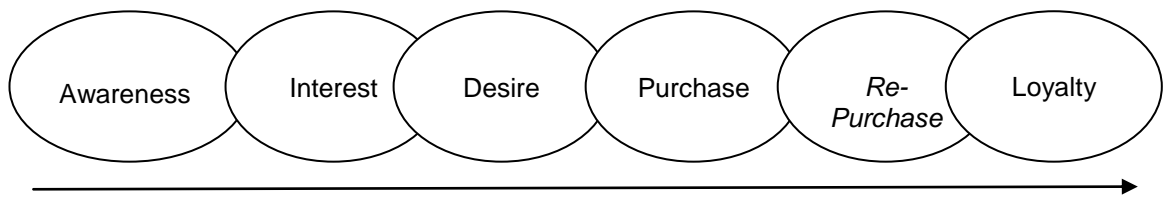


FIGURE: 6 Marketing communications process (Rope 2000, 280.)

Media Communications Process

In media communication process there are three different models of communication: traditional linear model of communication, the interactive communication model and the transactional communication model. Eric Tsai, the marketing strategist of designdamage.com and the social media expert defines these different models in the following (Tsai 2009):

- Traditional linear model of communication focuses on one way communication process where customer is only receiving information but is not able to interact. It is referred to newspaper and television media communication.
- The interactive communication model requires companies to involve dialogs with individuals. The main objective of interactive communication for companies is to improve their knowledge of customer behaviour through feedback and online discussion in forums.

- The transactional communication model is related to social networking. At corporate level it requires efficient engagement with individuals. The objective is sharing information in a way that allows audience to participate. This leads to building valuable customer relationships in the future and interactions.

The social media communication process Tsai describes as following;

“Social media conversation = transactional communication = meaningful engagement = trust = allow to compete = chance to win lifetime customer” (Tsai 2009.)

6 GETTING READY INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

After the research, the competitor analysis and the strategic planning there is the time to engage the strategy into the social media. Next the writer of the thesis will transfer the theoretical considerations to the actual social media performance of Glass Performance Days. What kind of an approach GPD should take in choosing social media sites? How GPD should be engaged in social media, to build the brand awareness and to measure obtained results?

To be successful in using social media technologies it is important to get ready internally first. Even though companies are aware of the value of social media it does not mean that they are ready for it or understand it. In order to maximize the effort and results in social media there has to be a certain level of understanding of the social media sites, applications and communities. An effective way to measure a company's readiness would be to conduct an internal survey in all the departments of the company.

After measuring the readiness, the company needs to define the process, to create internal roles (who will take care of the social activity), and the stakeholders (who to be involved in the process). Social media policies and guidelines must be in line with the company's communication plan and internal guidelines. Policies and guidelines define what kind of information is appropriate to be shared. The media has been recently written about employees who had discussed negatively in social media about the employers or the customers. This has had a consequence that companies had fired these employees. With clear guidelines and policies these kind of behaviours online could have been avoided. (Li & Bernoff 2008.)

Externally companies need to listen where the discussions are made in social media, what is the subject that industry is talking about, the quality of communication and who are engaged in these conversations. By listening externally companies can improve their strategies by targeting them right in social media. (Li & Bernoff 2008.)

6.1 Social media engagement for GPD

Facebook

By starting to implement strategy for the social media Glass Performance Days could start in the Facebook. Facebook is currently the number one of social networking platforms in social media.

(Source: <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>).

Facebook is considered to be the best page for engagement in social media and it keeps attracting companies more and more every year. The advantage of Facebook is also the mobile use. A very mobile unit such as GPD can update and respond to comments through mobile phone. It requires only a WLAN network that can be found e.g. at airports and hotels.

(Source: <http://www.facebook.com/mobile>)

In Facebook GPD objective would be to establish an educational role that contains sharing information, engagement in conversations, uploading images and videos of the conference. These objectives would improve customer relationships and increase the brand awareness. Objectives would be processed by creating a GPD fan page where everyone who is interested about GPD activities could join.

(Source: <http://www.hubspot.com/facebook-for-business-marketing-kit/>)



Source: www.facebook.com/#!/pages/GPD-Glass-Performance-Days-conference/91188889859

Creating a fan page does not require any financial investments. It is free and most of the business-to-consumer companies already use these kind of free fan

pages to implement their marketing campaigns. There is a chance to set up a close community where only people with invitation could join. These close communities often do not get followers and it is not considered to be an efficient solution when the primary goals are to release as much as possible information, and to build customer relationships and brand awareness.

Communication needs to follow the marketing communications process and to follow the set objectives. At first the awareness of GPD in social media has to be established by setting a link from GPD homepage to Facebook fan page and by inviting glass industry people to join GPD Facebook. This will create the necessary engagement with followers and start to build the traffic on site. Communication between GPD and followers has to be transparent in social media. Replying to feedback, questions and inquiries needs to be ongoing. This way the best possible customer relationship and flow of information can be provided.

Facebook communication should be short and catching. Usually it is considered that the best updates are max.120 words. Short and catching updates create efficient dialog between GPD and customer. Updates should be made rather often. In GPD case there are periods when there is a lot of information to be shared especially closer to conferences, but there are periods when there is not new information available. The best way to keep the fan page fresh is to upload new images from previous conferences and to add links to glass industry articles and videos. GPD also should do ongoing promotion in Facebook. Promoting the GPD e-book, next trade fairs and expos where GPD is attending.

Promotion and to get followers is very tricky, but the best way is to start internally. Encourage own employees to join GPD Facebook and open a discussion there. This will create outside a positive image from the beginning. To attract followers GPD has now a good opportunity to take advantage of its large contact database. Through contact database promotion would focus directly on glass industry professionals that would create the much wanted professional input from the beginning. Promotion would be done also from the homepage by setting direct links from the GPD homepage to GPD Facebook and otherwise. This will increase the traffic in homepage and social media.

Twitter

The second social media platform for Glass Performance Days would be engagement in Twitter. Twitter is a microblogging platform that is considered to be a low risk and it requires low resources input compared to other corporation communication. Engagement in Twitter provides creditability and leadership for GPD business.

The objective in Twitter platform for GPD would to give the audience a change for low-barrier method to interact, to provide feedback, and to seek for information and suggest ideas for future Glass Performance Days events.

Promoting the Twitter activity would start from implementing a link from GPD homepage to twitter page, this can be provided by using the bookmark and by sharing application available in GPD homepage. Promotion should be done also in Facebook fan page by setting a link to Twitter. This way the full capability of the social media and the possibility to connect social networks would be in use. Promoting requires also same aspects as are used in launching of the Facebook fan page; internally by inviting people to join GPD Twitter as followers and by inviting externally glass professional who are in Twitter to follow the GPD performance. Social media promotion needs to be done ongoing. A very effective way for ongoing promotion is to implement GPD social media sites to e-mails, by using GPD letters and by adding the social media in marketing materials that GPD uses at trade fairs. Communication input in Twitter channel would focus directly on information releasing of the GPD events, on links to homepage, on glass industry articles and events GPD is attending next. Twitter allows releasing short messages (Tweets) with max. 140 characters and Twitter allows the same mobile advantage than Facebook.

The next diagram (figure 7) shows why engagement in Twitter is a benefit for GPD. The majority of twitter users are seeking for information and comments about the events and speakers. The followers are also doing the promotion on behalf of the business. They share information in their personal twitter page about the events they are participating next. To keep the followers interested requires from the GPD team to do tweeting frequently.

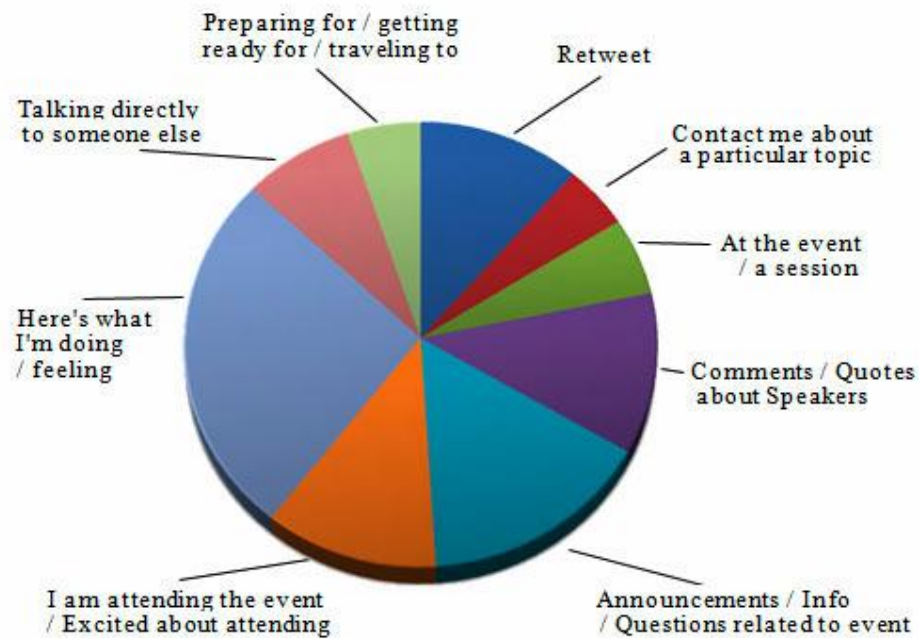


FIGURE 7. Tweets (<http://twittercounter.com>)

A survey of Nielsen Wire, released in March 2009, shows that Twitter is moving towards a professional use. According to the survey (McGibouney 2009):

- In February 2009, adults aged 35-49 had the largest representation on Twitter.
- 62% of the audience access Twitter from work only, while only 35% access it only from home.
- The average unique visitor went to Twitter 14 times during the month.

Figure 8 reveals the importance of Twitter to GPD. Glass Performance Days conference is held in India 2011 (India 2nd in traffic) and 2010 it was held in Brazil (Brazil 6th in traffic). Many of the co-operation partners of GPD come from the United States (USA 1st in traffic), Germany (4th in traffic) and the United Kingdom (UK 5th in traffic). Through Twitter GPD can efficiently engage and promote its events because the target countries/audiences are already present there. The next diagram (figure 8) shows the traffic statistics globally.

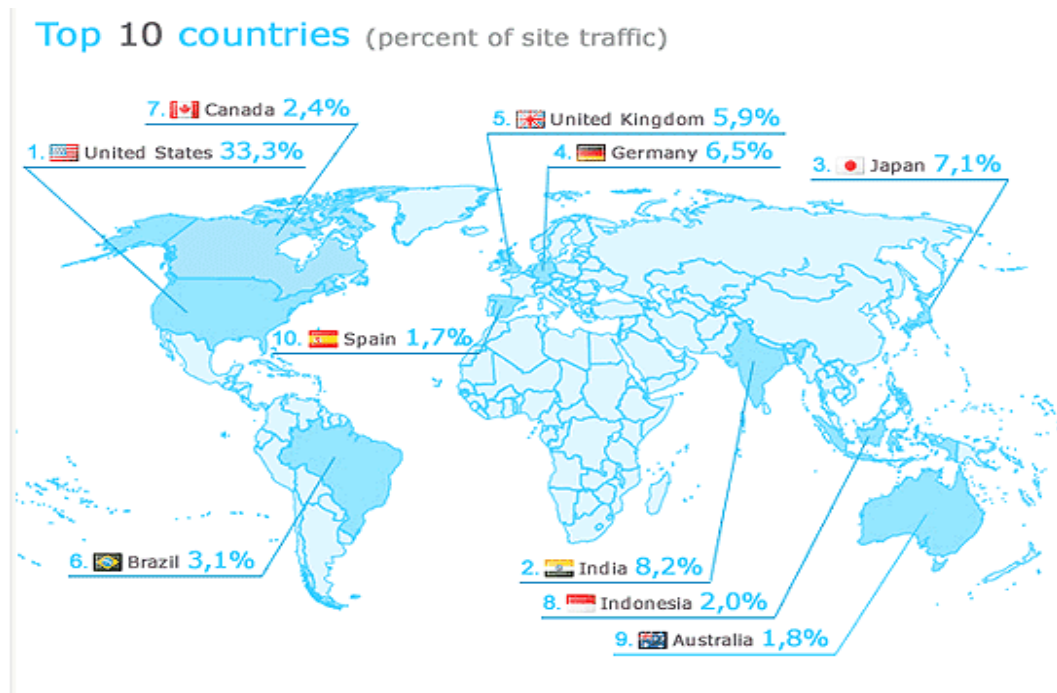


FIGURE 8. Twitter 10 Countries (<http://twittercounter.com>,
<http://www.watblog.com/2009/07/21/twitter-stats-by-sysomos-an-analysis/>)

Linkedin

Linkedin is the world's largest professional network. For business-to-business it is an important hub to share ideas, knowledge and to build the brand awareness. (Source: <http://learn.linkedin.com/what-is-linkedin/>).

Commonly companies establish a group in Linkedin about their industry area. One criticism of Linkedin is that groups focus directly on the company perspective of view. The communication is not interactive and it focuses on the company not in the context of a customer desire. (Falls 2010.)

To avoid occurred criticism Glass Performance Days need to turn the information in form that is relevant to the audience.

The objectives and strategy for Linkedin would be to increase brand awareness, to network with prospects, peers and customers, to share information and have interaction that focuses directly on business-to-business professionals. In

Linkedin GPD could bring more aggressive approach to increase conference sales. (DiMarino 2010.)

Participants of Glass Performance Days conference are usually decision makers in the company or they have influence in purchases. According to the study made by Anderson Analytics in 2008 it was stated that (Anderson 2008):

“The majority of Linkedin users are decision makers within their company (66%), and that they tend to be active on the site”.

For business-to-business companies this gives a solid advantage to increase sales. To discover these professionals in Linkedin GPD has to search the areas (groups) where glass industry professionals are active in Linkedin. Using search tools such as Linkedin Answers and Group Searches GPD can target these customers and implement own inquiries. (<http://www.linkedin.com/answers>, <http://www.linkedin.com/groupsDirectory>)

The best way to start Linkedin activities is internally like in any other social platform. Encourage own employees (executives) to optimize their Linkedin profiles to match with the Glass Performance Days business profile. Establishing a Glass Performance Days business profile is essential in Linkedin. It allows the interactions to stay in business-to-business area. Financially this is also an advantage to GPD, because creating a business profile does not require any financial input, it is free.

To optimize a Linkedin business profile and to take the full advantage of social media promotion GPD has to set up links to Linkedin from the present social media sites Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, also from the GPD homepage so the steady traffic can be kept. For the audience information searching is now better available through different sources. To maintain the high level of information sharing and creating the brand awareness GPD has to engage and participate in communication ongoing. This requires responding inquiries and updating GPD Linkedin business profile often so that only the newest information is available in Linkedin.

YouTube

YouTube is an online video hosting and sharing website offering visitors and members the chance to view videos online. It also gives the opportunity to upload videos. The possibility to upload videos has made YouTube one of the largest growing websites online. The power of YouTube has been increased past years rapidly. Commonly it is thought YouTube is only for videos. Currently it is the second used search engine after Google and it has left behind search engine Yahoo (Hepburn 2010, Source: http://www.youtube.com/t/fact_sheet).

In YouTube there is one promotion video of Glass Performance Days conference. In GPD homepage there is a direct link to watch this video. In YouTube GPD has already started to be engaged in social media. The four minute video has been uploaded in December 2010 and in one month from the releasing it has been watched 35 times.

This means that GPD's social media engagement is already got response. Social media activity in YouTube must be continuing. To upload this four minute video in Facebook fan page, Twitter and LinkedIn. This way the full capacity of social media engagement is in use.

Next step would be uploading videos from previous conferences. This of course needs approval from the speakers. Uploading videos would build the brand awareness of Glass Performance Days. In the social environment GPD would be now engaging at high level.

6.2 Measuring social media results

Measuring return on investment is very challenging in social media, because it is difficult to measure the results of the financial investments in social media. Social media is social environment where the main goals for companies are to increase the brand awareness, improve the customer relationships and to share information. Turning these gained goals to revenue is almost impossible.

Social Media professionals encourage companies to measure social media with the ROMI (return on marketing investment) aspect. ROMI social media results can be measured in short and long term.

Short term ROMI is a simple index that measures the revenue or the market share or the contribution margins for every euro of marketing spend. The disadvantage of short term ROMI is that it is only evaluating the short term value on money spent. It ignores all the aspects of the long term output such as brand image value or customer relationship value.

Long term ROMI is commonly used for evaluating the increase of product awareness or brand image. Long term ROMI takes into account the short term aspects of profit and revenue and creates a balance between marketing and business analytics. The disadvantage of long term ROMI is that it creates a huge amount of data and this creates a challenge when organizations are combining business analytics data to marketing analytics data. (Tikkanen & Vassinen 2010, 73-84.)

In social media long term ROMI is the recommended approach. It has to be remembered that social media is an ongoing campaign and it takes at least six months to one year when the first social media results can be measured. A survey from 2009 indicates the difficulty of measuring social media strategies and campaigns. "Survey indicates that 84 % of the individual and businesses do not measure return of investment in social media. The problem is that they do not know how to measure". (Solis 2010.)

For business-to-business ROMI is not only tracking engagement but defining sections where companies can save money. These cost savings in social media can be gained through the market feedback and through the new product ideas which will reduce costs. When measuring Glass Performance Days activity in social media this must be combined with the social media strategy goals.

For GPD these goals are sharing information, educating, building customer relationships and increasing the brand awareness. These main GPD objectives in social media platforms can be measured by:

- Reach: How many people GPD has managed to contact through social media and how many new followers have joined GPD's social media. Optimal time to start measuring is six months after engaging in social media. How many new potential customers have been reached through social media?
- Frequency and traffic: How frequently GPD has shared new information, updated links or uploaded videos to social media during a certain period of time? This reflects directly to traffic. How much the frequent posting has increased traffic (visitors) in GPD's social media platforms and webpage?
- Conversation: Quality of conversations and quality of content or shared links. How fast GPD is replying to inquiries and feedback in social media?
- Influence: How the brand awareness of GPD has been increased with the use of social media? How the engagement in social media has influenced customer relationships.

To measure these issues there are variable tools to be used in social media such as Radian6 – social media monitoring tool, Alterian social media monitoring tools, InsideFacebook and Twittermeter. These are very useful and commonly used tools but they are not provided for free and therefore need a financial investment from the company. A suggestion for Glass Performance Days is to keep track of results by themselves by making a Microsoft Excel matrix for social media that defines all the categories mentioned above.

(Source: <http://www.radian6.com>, <http://www.insidefacebook.com>, <http://www.tweetmeter.com>)

7 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this bachelor's thesis has been to build up a marketing strategy for entering to social media. Building up the marketing strategy starts with the planning process, competitor analysis and definition of marketing strategy; what opportunities and threats social media holds. The last phase of the marketing strategy plan in this bachelor's thesis is implementing an actual engaging strategy for business-to-business company in social media. The research made by using several theoretical sources of information implements that despite the marketing challenges in social media for business-to-business purposes, business-to-business companies can succeed in social media. The challenges occurred in the following area; social media is related more to business-to-consumer marketing. This is one of the reasons why business-to-business companies have avoided entering to social media. Business-to-business companies consider that the technological use of social media is difficult but the biggest obstacle to entering to social media is their lack of knowledge of social media.

Social media is a new area of marketing communications and the success of social media has convinced that this trend is here to stay. Recently business-to-business companies have been more encouraged to enter to social media. It can be stated that building up customer relationships and the brand awareness in social media is an addition to traditional marketing communications. Some social media professionals say that it is already too late to enter to social media. The opinion the writer of this bachelor's thesis is that this might be the case for business-to-consumer companies but like the writer demonstrates in the perceptual map of glass conferences globally, it is not too late; now it is the time to enter if the company wants to achieve the marketing advantage to its competitors.

The planning process and building up the right strategy for social media are the key elements on which business-to-business companies should focus. Planning the vision; why we want to enter and what we want to achieve there? Listening conversations about the company, industry and where the discussions are made. Listening is an important element of the planning process and of creating

strategies before engagement in social media. Social media engagement is a long process and immediate results can not be achieved. Objectives need to be clear and realistic. Otherwise it is just waste of time and valuable resources. Business-to-business objectives can be: to increase sales, to create brand awareness, to build up customer relationships and to achieve competitive advantage to competitors.

Without a marketing strategy companies are doomed to fail in social media. Companies need to leave the engagement process in social media to be the last thing of the process. Building the social media strategy can be done by using the same tools as in traditional marketing. Through analysing competitors important information can be obtained about how competitors are performing in social media and where. It helps a business-to-business company to determine its own strategy and innovative new approaches. Before entering to social media companies need to measure internally how ready they are for social media and determine by using e.g. SWOT-analysis their strengths and weaknesses. For business-to-business companies this facilitates the strategy building and lowers the barrier to take part in the communication. Externally companies can determine the opportunities that can be achieved through the engagement and what might be the possible threats. Recently the media has published stories about employees who have written negatively of their employers in social media. This has led to firing these employees. The damage to the company image has already been done. Without setting internally policies and guidelines for social media communication this kind of negative writing causes a threat.

Business-to-business companies need to be encouraged and best way to establish a social media presence is through a few social media sites to start with. It has to be remembered that engagement in social media is an ongoing process and it needs to be developed continuously.

When doing research for his bachelor's thesis the writer discovered successful social media marketing campaigns in business-to-consumer marketing, such as social media marketing campaigns of Dell, Starbucks and Apple. The writer had to leave aspects of business-to-consumer marketing away, because the

interpretation of social media is very wide. This is why he has only focused on the business-to-business marketing. The writer of this bachelor's thesis believes that the outcomes of the thesis can give a solid approach for marketing strategy planning of social media and for actual social media engagement. It has to be remembered that the objectives and goals vary from one company to another.

Based on the research and results of this thesis it can be assumed that business-to-business industries will use more social media in the future. Currently there are not many enterprises using social media in business-to-business marketing so it is interesting to discover if business-to-business industries can achieve high level of success in social media like the business-to-consumer industries have done.

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